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## **United States Agency for International Development**

**For Immediate Release**

**December 7, 2005**

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### USAID Provides Seeds and Fertilizer to Malawian Farmers

In response to the deteriorating food security situation in Malawi, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is providing approximately \$840,000 to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to help 30,000 vulnerable households. The U.S. assistance will provide seeds and fertilizer to smallholder farmers to use for planting this season. In September, USAID provided \$400,000 to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) to monitor the nutritional status of children in Malawi.

This funding is in addition to USAID's ongoing food assistance to the people of Malawi. Since June 2005, USAID has provided 51,960 metric tons of food assistance valued at more than \$36.1 million (MK 4.33 billion) to the U.N. World Food Program (WFP). In addition to funding development programs, USAID has provided more than \$44 million in humanitarian assistance to Malawi in 2004 and 2005.

Poor rainfall across Malawi in February and March 2005 combined with inadequate supplies of fertilizer to decimate this year's maize crop. As a result, Malawi produced approximately 1.2 million MT of maize during the 2004/2005 agricultural season. This is 36 percent less than the production in recent years. The most affected districts are in the Southern and Central regions. In late November, a revised Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) report indicated that nearly 4.8 million people will require food assistance until the next harvest in March 2006. Other factors, such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, and increases in the prices of petrol and diesel have made it difficult for vulnerable households in Malawi to purchase food this year.